

not only to dream great dreams but to make them a reality. I hope our colleagues will join me in expressing our heartfelt condolences to his family, his followers, and to future generations who will be enriched by his legacy.

#### HONORING RITA CANNING

#### HON. RAHM EMANUEL

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 4, 2005*

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a distinguished Chicago resident, Rita Canning. Rita has worked tirelessly for the rights of women and families in Chicago. Her advocacy and contribution to public service deserve the recognition and thanks of this Congress.

Rita currently serves as President of WINGS, Women In Need of Growing Stronger. This transitional shelter offers support to homeless and abused women and children in Chicago through training programs as well as job placement services to women in need. Under Rita's leadership, WINGS helps marginalized women re-enter the workforce with greater job skills and with the resources necessary to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

Rita also founded the Palatine Home of the Sparrow, a shelter for women and children in Chicago, and she is in the process of establishing the first domestic violence shelter in Chicago's northwest suburbs.

In addition to her work with the homeless, Rita does great things for education in our community through her work with the Canning Foundation. She serves as Vice-President of this foundation, which awards over 100 private school scholarships annually to inner-city children.

Rita is also a member of the Women's Board of Northwestern University, the Women's Board of the Field Museum, and is a Director of Harris Bank. Her husband, John A. Canning, Jr., is the Director of the Federal Reserve Bank in Chicago and shares Rita's passion of giving back to the community by pursuing several philanthropic endeavors.

Rita's tremendous dedication to public service has been recognized with various awards of excellence. In 2001, for example, Rita received the Sears Distinguished Leader Award for exemplary volunteer work and contributions. She also recently received the Illinois state treasurer's "Woman to Woman Making a Difference Award."

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to call Rita Canning a good friend and to recognize her invaluable contributions to public service. On behalf of the Fifth Congressional District and indeed all of Chicago, I thank her for her selfless dedication and hard work on behalf of women and families in our community.

#### THE PRESERVING ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE DRUGS ACT

#### HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 4, 2005*

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to be introducing the Preserving Access

to Affordable Drugs Act to preserve the drug benefits that millions of seniors in our country currently enjoy. Unfortunately, the misguided Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 threatens to reduce or eliminate the prescription drug benefits that millions of seniors across the country already have. Based on these and other detrimental provisions in the new law, which seniors continue to oppose vehemently, we should simply repeal the entire bill outright. But in the meantime, the bill I'm introducing today highlights the most egregious loss of benefits that seniors will suffer under the new law, and provides mechanisms to "hold harmless" those seniors who already have good drug coverage.

The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that as many as 1.7 million retirees could lose their employer-based prescription drug benefits as a result of the new Medicare prescription drug benefit. Also as a result of the new law, hundreds of thousands of seniors currently enrolled in state pharmacy assistance programs (SPAPs) will be forced out of those programs and into a private Medicare drug plan. Approximately six million seniors who are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid will lose access to their Medicaid prescription drug benefits, which is more generous and has greater access to a variety of drugs. And, despite the fact that the new Medicare law has huge gaps in coverage, seniors who choose to enroll in the new drug benefit will be prohibited from purchasing Medigap coverage to pay for prescription drugs not covered by the new Medicare benefit.

In my home state of New Jersey, alone, 94,000 retirees will lose their employer-based prescription drug benefits. More than 150,000 low-income seniors in New Jersey who are dually eligible for, and enrolled in, both Medicare and Medicaid will lose access to the Medicaid drug benefits they currently rely on. And 220,000 New Jersey seniors who are currently enrolled in Pharmaceutical Assistance for the Aged and Disabled (PAAD) and Senior Gold, the state's pharmacy assistance programs for the aged and disabled, will face disruption in coverage and will likely receive less drug coverage than they currently receive.

It is my view—and based on what I have heard in town hall meetings in my district, the view of an overwhelming majority of seniors in this country—that no senior should be made worse off by the new Medicare law.

The legislation I'm introducing today will:

Preserve employer-based retiree prescription drug coverage by allowing employer expenditures on drug costs to count toward the out-of-pocket threshold of \$3600. By not counting toward the catastrophic cap any costs covered by employer-provided retiree benefits, those employers that maintain their retiree health benefits would see their retirees receive less of a Medicare subsidy than a beneficiary without employer-provided benefits. Without this fix, approximately 94,000 New Jersey seniors and 1.7 million retirees nationwide will likely lose their employer-based drug coverage.

Enable states, if they choose, to administer the Medicare prescription drug benefit through their existing state pharmacy assistance program. This means that my home state of New Jersey could continue to provide prescription drug benefits to seniors through the very suc-

cessful and popular existing PAAD and Senior Gold programs. As a result, these seniors will not have to enroll in the less-generous Medicare drug program, will be able to remain in PAAD and Senior Gold, and will experience no disruption in coverage.

Ensure that States can provide supplemental Medicaid prescription drug coverage to complement the Medicare drug benefit to seniors who are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid. Currently in New Jersey, 152,000 low-income seniors and disabled individuals who are Medicare eligible receive 100% of their drug coverage through the state Medicaid program. The Medicare bill replaces Medicaid coverage with more limited drug coverage and prohibits states from wrapping around the Medicare benefit with Medicaid coverage. This bill will enable states to completely wrap around through the Medicaid program.

Restore Medicare beneficiaries' ability to purchase supplemental drug coverage through the Medigap program. Under the new law, those who participate in the new Part D drug benefit are prohibited from purchasing supplemental drug coverage through the Medigap program.

Eliminate the premium support (Medicare privatization) demonstration program. This is particularly important for Gloucester, Camden, Burlington and Salem counties in southern New Jersey, which currently meet the qualifications to be selected to participate in this program.

Simply stated, a Medicare prescription drug benefit that chips away at the generous drug coverage that some seniors already enjoy is hardly a benefit at all. The new Medicare law is bad for seniors and should be repealed; but in the meantime, at the very least, we must do no harm.

That's exactly what this bill intends to do.

#### TRIBUTE TO A FALLEN SOLDIER

#### HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 4, 2005*

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to a fallen soldier from the Ninth Congressional District of Florida. Lance Corporal James Phillips, from Plant City, Florida, was shot and killed as Marines were clearing houses in Fallujah, Iraq on December 23, 2004.

James' decision to join the Marines demonstrates his dedication and service to this Nation. Following high school, our young people have many opportunities and wide open doors to pursue their dreams. James chose the path of the Marines because he believed that it was his honor and duty to serve his Nation and protect our freedom. He did not choose this path because he thought that he would one day become a war hero or that this career would provide him a lucrative and extravagant life.

I know it has been a very hard and difficult time for James' family and friends, especially to lose him so close to the Christmas holidays. I hope they know that the Nation thanks him for his service and we appreciate the sacrifices they had to make for us as well.

Let freedom ring where all can hear it and let Lance Corporal James Phillip's memory be eternal.